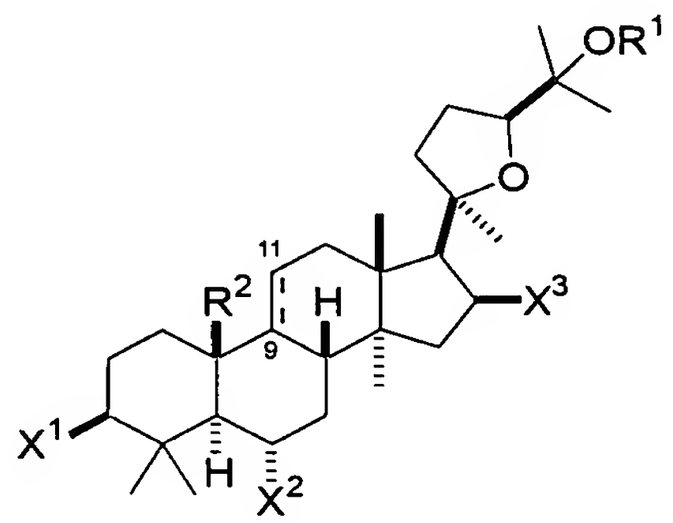
Amendments to the Claims

1. (Original) A method for conditioning the skin, comprising: applying topically to the skin a formulation comprising a compound of formula **I**:



I

where:

each of X^1, X^2, and X^3 is independently selected from hydroxy, lower alkoxy, lower acyloxy, keto, and a glycoside;

OR^1 is selected from hydroxy, lower alkoxy, lower acyloxy, and a glycoside;

wherein any of the hydroxyl groups on said glycoside may be substituted with a further glycoside, lower alkyl, or lower acyl, such that the compound includes a maximum of three glycosides; and

R^2 is methyl and ---- represents a double bond between carbons 9 and 11; or, R^2 forms, together with carbon 9, a fused cyclopropyl ring, and ---- represents a single bond between carbons 9 and 11;

and wherein said formulation further comprises an ingredient selected from the group consisting of an emulsifier, a surfactant, a thickener, a skin emollient, and a lubricant, and an ingredient selected from the group consisting of a preservative, an antioxidant, and an antimicrobial agent.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said compound includes zero, one, or two glycosides, none of which is substituted with a further glycoside.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein said compound includes zero or two glycosides, none of which is substituted with a further glycoside.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein each said glycoside, when present, is of the D configuration.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein R^2 forms, together with carbon 9, a fused cyclopropyl ring; and ---- represents a single bond between carbons 9 and 11.

6. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein each of X^1 and X^2 is independently selected from hydroxy, lower alkoxy, lower acyloxy, and a glycoside, and X^3 is selected from hydroxy, lower alkoxy, lower acyloxy, keto, and a glycoside.

7. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein X^1 is OH or a glycoside, each of X^2 and OR^1 is independently OH or a glycoside, and X^3 is OH or keto.

8. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the compound is selected from astragaloside IV, cycloastragenol, astragenol, astragaloside IV 16-one, cycloastragenol 6-β-D-glucopyranoside, and cycloastragenol 3-β-D-xylopyranoside.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the compound is selected from astragaloside IV, cycloastragenol, astragenol, and astragaloside IV 16-one.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein said compound is astragaloside IV.

11-16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~or 11~~, wherein the concentration of said compound in said formulation is from 0.01 to 5% (w/v).

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein said concentration is from 0.01 to 1% (w/v).

19. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~or 11~~, wherein the concentration of said compound in said formulation is greater than 0.005% and less than 0.1% (w/v).

20. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~or 11~~, wherein the formulation further comprises one or more additional ingredients selected from the group consisting of an emulsifier, a thickener, and a skin emollient.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein the formulation comprises one or more ingredients selected from an emulsifier and a skin emollient.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the formulation comprises a skin emollient.

23. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~or 11~~, wherein the biological activity of said compound is such that a composition containing the compound at a concentration of 1 μg/ml or less is effective to produce a telomerase activity at least 25% greater than observed in a vehicle control, as measured in a TRAP assay of keratinocyte or fibroblast cells.

24. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 ~~or 11~~, wherein the biological activity of said compound is such that a composition containing the compound at a concentration of 1 μg/ml or less is effective to produce an amount of cell reconfluence in a scratch assay of keratinocytes which is at least 25% greater than that seen in untreated or other control cells.